

FIL 4300/4310/4320

Filosofisk Etikk – Høst 2014 – Christel Fricke

Response-dependent accounts of moral goodness and the challenge of specifying *normal* respondents and *normal* external conditions

Course evaluation by Christel Fricke

The course was based on reading that was both extensive and demanding. I expected participants to read the texts in advance so that, in class, we could focus on discussion. Every student had to introduce the discussion of one text.

18 participants had subscribed for the course, some of them I never saw. In the beginning, the students found the reading extremely difficult. Most of the presentations were of very modest quality. Still, the introductions gave me something to pick up on. I raised questions and then drew attention to certain text passages and encouraged participants to try out answers.

In the course of the semester, things improved substantively. My focus was always on making the participants aware of the fact that all the text tried to develop the same idea – even though in very different ways and with different kinds of challenge in focus. Once the students had understood what the overall concern of the debate was, they were themselves in a much better position to read and understand texts.

One development turned out to be particularly helpful: After a couple of weeks, some of the participants started a reading group that met before seminar sessions and discussed the text to be discussed in class in advance. They all found that extremely helpful, and as a result performance in class improved substantively.

All participants had to submit a draft of their essay. I met all of them twice: once for helping them to design the topic, or rather the main question they wanted to discuss, and once for giving them feedback on the draft. Thus, I invested quite a lot of time – but then there were no more than 15 students who wanted to get the credit points.

In the end, only 11 submitted their final papers. In cooperation with Reidar Maliks, I graded the papers. Here is the overview of the results:

5 A, 4 B, 1 C, 1 D.

I had the impression that my working with the students had been helpful, at least for most of the participants.

From my point of view, I see the main problem in irregular participation and poor engagement (reading the text in advance, trying to raise questions etc.). I had told people in advance that the reading would be rather difficult and that they could hardly expect to

understand the texts from having merely a very brief look at them. Those who participated regularly and prepared the reading could profit from discussions in class and then write a good paper.

Three students who had subscribed for the course informed me that they had either health problems or family problems that hindered them from participating regularly. I encouraged them to come and see me during my office hour for students, but few of them took the opportunity.

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